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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Animal Industry
Animal Husbandry Division

TENTATIVE TURKEY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The National Poultry Improvement Plan became operative July 1, 1935, under authority of an appropriation by Congress (Public No. 62-74th Congress - H. R. 6718) for the Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, to be used in cooperation with State authorities in the administration of regulations for the improvement of poultry, poultry products, and hatcheries.

During 1936, there were numerous requests to develop and institute provisions for turkey improvement as a part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan. Consequently, this tentative plan has been developed by a National Turkey Improvement Committee, representing the turkey industry in all sections of the United States in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Animal Industry. It is intended to serve as a guide for State turkey improvement work until such time as there may be sufficient demand to have a plan adopted as a section of the National Poultry Improvement Plan.

It is suggested that the name of the State should precede all terms describing products under this tentative plan. The prefix "U.S." should not be used until a turkey improvement plan is adopted as a part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan, and approved by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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This Tentative Turkey Improvement Plan has been developed with a view to the establishment of the turkey breeding industry upon as sound a basis as possible. The adoption of this plan in all parts of the United States should bring about an improvement in the quality of hatching eggs, poultts, breeding stock, and market products. Such results should cause turkey production to be more efficient and thus aid in making the turkey enterprise more profitable.

The primary purpose of this plan is to identify, authoritatively, turkey breeding stock, hatching eggs, and poultts with respect to quality by describing them in terms uniformly accepted in all parts of the country. Protection is thereby afforded producers from unscrupulous competition and purchasers are enabled to buy with greater confidence.

Proper Sanitation of Great Importance

Health is the foundation of successful husbandry since upon it depends successful production and reproduction. Constitutional vigor and sanitation provide the best insurance against ill health. Every poultryman and every hatcheryman, therefore, is under obligation to maintain the health of his laying and breeding stock and to keep his premises in the best possible state of sanitation.

Since the spread of the majority of the more important poultry diseases results from conditions of filth, it becomes evident that many disease conditions are amenable to sanitary measures.

It is recommended that turkeys should never be maintained in the same pens or on the same range with chickens, because of the danger of such combined management to turkeys from blackhead (*enterobspatitis*) and pullorum infection. Also, turkey eggs should be hatched in separate incubators from chicken eggs to guard against the spread of pullorum infection in turkeys, unless flocks from which both turkey and chicken hatching eggs are obtained are tested for pullorum disease and all reactors removed.

General Regulations

1. Official State Agency. — An official State agency is an agency such as the State department of agriculture, State college of agriculture, or other agency recognized officially by a State government. The official State agency shall direct, supervise, and be responsible for flock selection, testing for pullorum disease, and all other administrative work as provided for in this turkey improvement plan.

2. Official State Inspectors. -- An official State inspector is an employee of an official State agency whose major duties comprise the official inspection of flocks, eggs, poult, hatcheries, turkey premises, records, and methods employed in carrying on official State turkey improvement work.

3. All inspectors shall be authorized by the official State agency.

4. Flocks, eggs, poult, and hatcheries shall be subject to inspection at least once yearly by properly constituted authority.

5. In all flocks tested under this plan for pullorum disease, the testing shall be done by properly qualified persons designated by the official State agency.

6. All houses used for turkeys shall be kept clean and in good condition. The land in the immediate vicinity of the houses shall be kept in sanitary condition.

7. Hatcheries and all incubator equipment shall be kept in strictly sanitary condition.

8. All eggs used in any stage of this plan shall be reasonably uniform in size and shape, and sound in shell.

9. The hatchery management shall maintain the identity of hatching eggs being incubated, including those which are being custom hatched.

10. All poult shall be normal and representative of the variety.

11. Delivery of poult shall be made in approved types of boxes properly ventilated and securely tied and poult shall be shipped to reach the ultimate purchaser within the time limit prescribed by the U. S. Postal Regulations.

12. Poult and hatching eggs produced under the rules and regulations of this plan shall lose their identity as of the terminology used in the plan when they are purchased for resale by any person, firm, or corporation not participating in this plan.

13. Poult and hatching eggs of identical breeding stages and pullorum-control and eradication classes may be exchanged or bought for resale among members of the industry who are participating in the same phases of this turkey improvement plan. Members of the industry may purchase for resale, eggs or poult of higher stage or class than those which they produce, but such products may not be sold as of the higher stage or class.

14. Any person, firm, or corporation selling hatching eggs under the terminology described in this plan, other than from the flock or flocks of such person, firm or corporation, shall not sell hatching eggs from any flock or flocks, other than those which are under the supervision of this turkey improvement plan. Adequate records shall be kept and at all times be available to the official State agencies concerned. These records shall consist of the names and addresses of all flock owners supplying hatching

eggs of each variety sold to each purchaser.

15. With the approval of the official State agency, crossbred poults may be produced and sold by members operating under this turkey improvement plan, provided that both males and females in the breeding flocks meet at least the minimum requirements of the (State) Approved stage, including selection, leg banding, and inspection. Such poults shall not be designated as of any (State) breeding stage.

16. When more than one hatchery, whether located within a State or in two or more States, is operated under the same name, ownership, or management, all the said hatcheries must comply with the regulations of the (State) Approved or higher breeding stages before any one of them may offer for sale (State) Approved poults.

17. The use of the official terminology or any portion thereof of any particular breeding stage or pullorum control and eradication class, of this turkey improvement plan, in which members of the industry are participating, shall be limited to hatching eggs, poults, and breeding stock that meet at least the minimum requirements of that particular stage or class when produced by those under the jurisdiction of the official State agency.

18. Breeding stock and each bundle or package of hatching eggs and poults sold or offered for sale shall be designated by official labels or tags defining the breeding stage and pullorum control and eradication class in accord with the regulations of this turkey improvement plan, except that the following shall not be sold or offered for sale under official labels: (1) breeding stock, hatching eggs, and poults purchased for resale by a non-participating person, firm, or corporation (see Regulation No. 12); (2) breeding stock, hatching eggs, and poults consigned for sale.

19. All advertising must be in accord with the rules and regulations of this turkey improvement plan and the Fair Trade Practice rules of the Federal Trade Commission for the baby-chick industry. Copies of proposed folders, catalogues, circulars, or other printed literature shall be submitted to and approved by the official State agency before being printed and distributed. Copies of such literature after being printed shall be filed with the official State agency. Copies of all publication advertising shall be mailed to the official State agency at or before the time these advertisements are mailed to the publication or publications.

20. All advertising mentioning blood test or blood testing shall specify the disease tested for, the method used in conducting the test, and shall further state under what official supervision the test was conducted.

21. The term "tested" or "blood tested" shall not be used in connection with disease eradication or control except as outlined in this plan.

22. The usage of the word "accredited" to indicate breed improvement, disease eradication or control, or in any other way, is prohibited.

23. The selection of birds in a flock to qualify as (State) Approved or (State) Certified by an official State inspector shall be regarded as one official flock inspection.

FIRST TURKEY BREEDING STAGE

*(STATE) APPROVED FLOCKS shall meet the following requirements:

1. Males and females shall be carefully selected each year for constitutional vigor and standard qualities to a reasonably high degree. The following specifications shall also be met:

- (a) Conformation: Body deep, flesh of breast well developed, giving this region a rounded fullness, in contrast to sharp-keeled birds lacking in muscular development. Back wide and flat. Leg bones sturdy, of medium length and without coarseness.
- (b) Shape of breastbone: Breastbone straight and relatively long.
- (c) Rate of maturity: Birds showing definite indications of late maturity shall not be approved.
- (d) Weight: The minimum body weight shall be as follows:

All varieties

Lbs.

Adult tom -----	20
Yearling tom -----	16
Young tom (24 weeks) -----	12
Old hen -----	10
Young hen (24 weeks) -----	8

2. After the third year of (State) Approved turkey breeding work on any farm, males shall be from (State) Certified pen-matings or a higher breeding stage.

3. The selection of the flocks shall be inspected and approved by an official State inspector.

All birds to be used in the (State) Approved turkey flocks shall be individually selected by an official State inspector or by a turkey flock-selecting agent, who shall be required to take a course of training in standardbred and meat-production judging prescribed by the State college of agriculture or other properly constituted State agency and shall be required to pass an examination and be authorized by the official State agency to do turkey flock-selection work.

All birds selected for (State) Approved turkey flocks shall be banded at the time of selection, with sealed and numbered leg bands obtained from the official State agency. Birds rejected by the official State inspector or by the turkey flock-selecting agent shall have their tails clipped, leg bands removed, and shall be kept separate from the breeding flocks. The selection of birds for a (State) Approved turkey flock shall be completed prior to

* Change to name of the State in which this plan is adopted.

March 1 and at least 30 days before any eggs are saved for hatching purposes, except that this 30-day interval shall not be required if all males found in the breeding flock are approved. No birds shall be selected or approved earlier than at 24 weeks of age.

Before the individual flock, from which it is proposed to sell (State) Approved eggs or poult, may be recognized as a (State) Approved turkey flock, it shall be inspected and approved by an official State inspector. Before saving eggs for hatching or offering for sale (State) Approved turkey eggs or poult of any one variety, all the hatchery turkey flocks supplying eggs to the hatchery must be inspected and approved, by the official State inspector. The inspection of a flock by an official State inspector shall consist in the physical examination by handling of all males and a sufficient number of females to satisfy him that the flock-selection work performed meets the requirements of the (State) Approved turkey breeding stage.

No birds except those with official sealed and numbered leg bands shall be allowed in the breeding flocks, and no male birds shall be allowed with any other turkey females of breeding age on the same premises.

Where more than one variety is kept, ample provision shall be made to keep the varieties and their eggs separate.

(STATE) APPROVED TURKEY EGGS shall come only from (State) Approved turkey flocks or a higher (State) turkey breeding stage.

(STATE) APPROVED POULTS shall be hatched only from (State) Approved turkey eggs and in (State) Approved turkey hatcheries.

(STATE) APPROVED TURKEY HATCHERIES shall be inspected by an official inspector at least twice during the hatching season. The management shall keep accurate record concerning the name and address of each flock owner, the number of eggs received from each flock owner, name and address of each purchaser, the number, variety, and the date of shipment of all turkey hatching eggs and poult. These records shall be open for official inspection at all times. Eggs received and poult hatched shall be subject to inspection at all times. (State) Approved turkey hatcheries may not hatch for sale or sell other than (State) Approved poult except as provided for in General Regulation No. 15 and as hereinafter prescribed under the paragraph entitled (STATE) CERTIFIED POULTS.

SECOND TURKEY BREEDING STAGE

(STATE) CERTIFIED TURKEY FLOCKS (Flock Matings) shall fulfill all the requirements of (State) Approved turkey flocks and shall be free from disqualifications as described in the American Standard of Perfection except as to weight. The females shall be mated to sons of (State) Register of Merit Toms.

The birds shall be selected by an official State inspector once each year. All flocks shall be inspected by an official State inspector at least once during the hatching season. After the second year of (State) Certified turkey breeding work on any farm, females shall be from (State) Certified matings or a higher breeding stage.

(STATE) CERTIFIED TURKEY FLOCKS (Pen Matings) shall include only (State) Approved females or females of a higher turkey breeding stage mated to a son of a (State) Register of Merit tom. For the first and second years of [State] Certified Turkey Pen breeding on any farm, the tom need not be a son of a [State] Register of Merit tom.

Only one male shall be allowed in a single breeding pen and the date of entry and removal of males shall be properly recorded and reported to the official State agency.

For each breeding pen, an accurate daily record shall be kept of all eggs laid during the breeding season and a weekly record on the number of eggs sold, the number of eggs incubated, and the total number of good poult hatched and banded. Not later than the tenth day of each month during the breeding season, a copy of all egg-production records of the previous month shall be sent to the official State agency. Each egg shall be marked on the small end with the letter or number of the pen.

The poult from each pen shall be kept separate at hatching time and shall be banded individually at the time of removal from the hatching trays with official sealed and numbered wing bands. An accurate record of all poult banded shall be furnished the official State agency within five days after the date of the hatch. The poult shall be subject to inspection at any time. The bands from dead poult shall be retained for the information of the inspector and shall be delivered upon request.

(STATE) REGISTER OF MERIT TOM: Males that have been used to head a (State) Certified Turkey Pen Mating and such mating having met the following minimum requirements:

(1) Hatch: Sixty-five percent or more of all eggs set from the pen. An average of at least 20 eggs per female in the breeding pen, and a minimum of 200 eggs from the pen shall be set.

(2) Viability of Progeny: The minimum number of turkeys raised to market age shall be 75 percent of all poult started, and at least 100 turkeys from each pen shall be raised to the time of the fall inspection.

(3) Market Quality of Progeny: Each bird raised to market age shall be carefully examined prior to November 15. At the time of inspection, at least 60 percent of all male progeny and at least 80 percent of all female progeny shall be of (State) Approved quality, provided a minimum of 70 turkeys from each breeding pen meet these requirements.

In order to qualify to head a (State) Certified mating a male shall have passed the inspection of an official State inspector not earlier than at 24 weeks of age and shall be banded with an official sealed and numbered leg band. At the time of inspection and banding, the inspector shall make a complete record of the wing-and-leg-band numbers of each male banded.

(STATE) CERTIFIED TURKEY EGGS shall come only from (State) Certified flocks.

(STATE) CERTIFIED POULTS shall be hatched only from (State) Certified eggs and in (State) Certified hatcheries, except that a hatchery may produce and sell (State) Certified poultS of one variety and (State) Approved of another variety, in which case the hatchery shall be recognized as a (State) Approved turkey hatchery.

(STATE) CERTIFIED TURKEY HATCHERIES may not hatch for sale or sell other than (State) Certified turkey eggs or poultS except as provided for in General Regulation No. 15. They shall fulfill all the requirements of (State) Approved turkey hatcheries and shall be inspected by an official State inspector at least twice during the hatching season.

THIRD TURKEY BREEDING STAGE

It is not considered advisable to include a trap-nest breeding stage in the tentative turkey improvement plan at this time because of the limited experience in this work.

PULLORUM CONTROL AND ERADICATION

Pullorum testing will be optional as in the National Poultry Improvement Plan. Also the same requirements and terminology will apply, except that the prefix "U. S." shall not be used until a turkey improvement plan is adopted as a part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan.

